

What does *Foundations* say about "Calendar Time"?

In many pre-kindergarten classrooms serving children ages 3, 4, and pre-k five years, one often witnesses teachers having children repeat the names of the days of the week and count the numbers of the days in each month. This practice often takes as much as 15 minutes in a group setting involving all of the children in the classroom. Does this practice make the most of limited time available to teach children developmentally appropriate, useful, and interesting information and skills? Is teaching "calendar information" even appropriate in pre-k classrooms?



According to *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for NC Preschoolers and Strategies to Guide their Success* (2004), in pre-k:

Children begin to describe or demonstrate a sequence of events, and;

Children begin to understand the passage of time within their daily lives (daily routines and the order of events).

(Mathematical Thinking and Expression, p. 44).

In the *NC Standard Course of Study: Kindergarten Mathematics Curriculum*, kindergarten children are to learn to:

Recognize concepts of calendar time using appropriate vocabulary (days of the week, months of the year, seasons). (Objective 2.02)

Therefore, it would seem more appropriate in pre-k to focus on helping children to **understand and be able to describe sequence and order of events, especially those within their daily lives and routines**, and leave "Calendar Time" to kindergarten teachers.



Alternatives to "Calendar Time" pre-k classroom

- Go over picture schedule of daily routines with children during each "morning circle," (e.g., picture of children having breakfast, picture of children playing in centers, picture of children cleaning up, picture of children in group time, picture of children going outside, picture of children washing hands, picture of children eating lunch, picture of children resting, picture of children going home);
- At end of the day and/or as children leave, have children hug a heart-shaped pillow and say what they loved about that day. The teacher/assistant writes down what the children say on a piece of paper labeled for each day, e.g., Monday, Tuesday. At the end of the week, the teacher/assistant combines these sheets of paper into that week's "Book of What We Loved This Week" and keeps in the classroom for children to read and illustrate.
- Talk with children about relevant past and future events (*Foundations*, p. 45) Use the calendar as a tool to keep

track of important events (*Creative Curriculum*, 4th ed., p.85)

- Encourage children to act-out, tell and re-tell new and familiar stories with pictures and props in small groups, in the dramatic play center, and outside.
- Work on counting through out the day in real life situations, e.g., numbers of children, counting out napkins for snack, counting number of pine cones found on the play ground.

